

NOVEMBER 1, 1952



# THE NATIONAL *Voter* LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE U. S.

1026 17TH STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

## *The President and His Job*

**M**OST of us have by now decided how to vote on November 4. Some of us will cast our ballots on what we feel the parties stand for. Others will think more in terms of the qualifications of the opposing candidates for the office of the Presidency. Most of us will try to combine these two considerations; acknowledging the importance of party principles, but trying also to judge the qualifications of the individual for the job.

The second consideration has not, in the heat of the campaign, received as much attention as the first. We hear almost no discussion of the nature of the job the candidate will have to fill, and little appraisal of his qualifications in the light of the things he will have to do after January 20.

A modern business man in search of employees has before him a "job description," an orderly list of the responsibilities required by the position to be filled. With this guide he measures applicants against the things they will be called upon to do. Perhaps many of us, before we go to the polls to hire a President for the next four years, might be helped by a similar device.

An adequate "job description" of the Presidency would fill books—and has. But though the average citizen feels well enough acquainted with the President to call him "Harry" or "Hoover" he may not often think about the wide range of responsibilities which a President must carry.

The Constitution alone assigns so many duties and roles to the President that it is hard for political scientists to agree on a definition of his powers. In addition, customary practice and the vast expansion of government in the 20th century have multiplied Presidential responsibilities to the point that Franklin Roosevelt thought he did more work in a day than many of his predecessors had to cope with in a month.

Under our so-called separation of powers we think of legislative responsibility as resting with the Congress. Yet almost immediately upon taking office the President must make up his legislative recommendations and his budget. If he is to carry out the program upon which he campaigned, he will need laws and money. Without the cooperation of Congress he can do very little.

Will your candidate get along with Congress?

Clearly, the answer cannot be found entirely in the President. Much depends upon the men who are elected to the 83rd Congress. Within these limits, and those set by our system, how well will the President be able to persuade Congress to work with him for what he, and those who elected him, conceive to be the national interest?

Another large segment of the President's responsibility is to be the Chief Executive. He must be the general manager of the vast federal establishment, and at the same time carry final military responsibility as Commander in Chief of our Armed Forces. He must choose men to help him, and much of his success or failure will depend on his ability to judge men. He cannot possibly be familiar with more than a fraction of the detailed work undertaken by even one department of the government. Yet his is the final responsibility for the way these departments operate.

Each department is surrounded by special pressure groups: farm organizations exert pressure on the Department of Agriculture; labor unions on the Department of Labor; business men on the Department of Commerce, and so on. The heads of these departments must be chosen with the views of these groups in mind. Yet they must also be men who can help the President weld all the conflicting views of different segments of the population into a coherent national policy.

The choice of subordinates also has a great deal to do with the establishment of the moral tone of any Administration. Here again, it is humanly impossible for the President to know in detail what two million federal employees are doing. His appointed officials must not only be capable, they must be men of the highest integrity.

The President, as head of the whole nation, must lay down a series of policies which he believes will promote the general welfare. These policies will only take on meaning as they are translated into day to day actions by thousands of federal employees in hundreds of departments and agencies. A successful President will need a clear understanding of the inner workings of bureaucracy, and of the relationships of the departments to the public, if he is to see his programs take on flesh and blood.

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# Everyone's Getting Into the Act!



IF fewer than 110% of the eligible voters go to the polls in November I can't think of a single solitary soul to blame. I believe I was the last hold-out and I succumbed after a typical day I'll describe in a minute.

Don't misunderstand me. I had intended to VOTE all along, but I had steadfastly resisted joining the ever-increasing crew who are getting other people to vote this year. But I gave in. Here's why.

The day that provided the inevitable straw started like any other day—almost. My alarm clock radio went on but instead of the dulcet tones of Perry Como to arouse me from my slumber there was the reproachful voice of the announcer "Don't walk, RUN to your precinct polling place. Remember—only three more days to register!"

I snapped him off in a hurry and walked to the front door where I picked up the paper and tucked it under my arm—no knotty world problems or politician's platitudes until I had my coffee. I bent again to gather up the milk. Around the neck of every bottle was a little collar emblazoned with the words "Read! Think! Vote!"

My next admonition came from—of all places—the back of the Squeakies box. I picked it up expecting to see the familiar face of Roy Rogers and saw instead General Eisenhower and Governor Stevenson looking sternly at each other.

Fortified by coffee and full of Squeakies I picked up the paper to find it bulging with complete texts of speeches, voting records, replies to candidates' questionnaires and a stirring editorial exhorting me to vote. The babble at the breakfast table was all of elections. Friend husband announced on departure that he wouldn't be home for dinner—had to go to a barbecue for the governor. All three of the children seemed to be as up to their necks in politics as their dad. The oldest, a high school junior, was chairman of a mock election and apparently this was the night for the torchlight parade and speeches by the "candidates." The other two argued all through the meal as to which of their school rooms was going to get the credit on election day for dad's and my vote. I had been hearing this election tag contest discussed for weeks. In fact both my mother and my mother-in-law had given stringing parties to get the tags ready for the kids. No one apparently had resolved the thorny problem of how parents with more than one child could divvy up their votes.

Aside from two phone calls inquiring "Are you registered?" and breaking a finger nail, I got ready for my shopping tour in record time. The brand new emery board I got out to repair my nail had "Register and Vote" emblazoned right on the scratchy side in red, white, and blue. I filed with a little added vigor. Some zealous member of the family (and our family seems to be so full of them I don't know which one it was) had pasted a little sticker on the bathroom mirror "Are you looking at a registered voter?" I was beginning to feel not only registered but pedigreed. On my way down town I passed no fewer than three

sound trucks exhorting me to (you guessed it) vote. One was done with a song, including a singing march, "Voters on Parade" by Vaughn Monroe; one advertised that it had a traveling registrar aboard who would be happy to have me register right then and there and the other invited me to attend a candidates' meeting that evening.

"Not for me," said I, "a little relaxing shopping is what I need." Hah, I should have known better. In the biggest department store in town they were utilizing the loud speaker system they usually pull out only for Christmas carols and were singing about voting, talking about voting, and then singing some more. I escaped into a little lingerie shop to buy a slip. It was beautifully quiet but quiet can sometimes be deceiving. Before the sales girl showed me any slips at all she asked brightly, "Have you seen this?" THIS was a little pamphlet put out by a well known "foundation" concern. It was entitled "You Can Be An Important FIGURE in this Campaign." I read it over lunch. I found I could just squeeze it into the space left between the sugar bowl and a little cardboard sign on the table saying "Vote as you please—but PLEASE Vote!" After a leisurely lunch I wiped my mouth with a napkin which bore the legend "Vote, Vote, Vote" and left in a hurry.

I tried to make some calls but one friend was addressing envelopes for the Republicans; another was addressing a meeting for the Democrats; a third was tracking down a duck for a voters display at the fair ("Don't Squawk if you don't vote" or some such worldly advice.) I was glad to get home.

Dinner was a hectic affair with everyone but me hustling through to get on with his political duties. After a telephone call from a friend who wanted to get hold of a cow to take part in a parade wearing a placard "I am registered—Are you?" I turned on the television. There was Walter Cronkite looking right straight at me and saying "Participation is SOOOOOO easy. But remember you cannot vote unless you register. Act now." I did. I turned off Mr. C., picked up the phone. I'm on my way now to deliver some campaign literature. See you at the polls November 4!

## L.W.V. on TV. . .



For six half-hours during October and November Mrs. Lee presides over a television show on the Dumont Network (Tuesday nights at 8:00 E.S.T.) called THE POWER OF WOMEN. Pictured here are Mrs. Lee and her guests during the second program

which was called "What's The Point of Point Four?" Mrs. Lee is seated. Standing left to right: Mrs. Frank Trager, wife of TCA administrator in Burma; Miss Vidya Chandra, Indian Information Service; Mrs. Anthony Waller (Helen Hiatt Waller), Director of the Herald Tribune Forum. Still to come is the program on November 11 entitled "Who Cares?"

## Double Duty

**Y**OUR Voters Service Committee is leading a double life! In your own community you know it is distributing information that helps you and your neighbors decide how and for whom to vote. What you may not know is that your Voters Service Committee is also working in Washington, D. C.!

Citizens of the District have no vote unless they can qualify for an absentee ballot in one of the states. By using the mail box for their ballot box, these absentee voters contribute to the total count in almost every city in the country.

Each year many thousands of District residents call the League of Women Voters for information and help. To meet this need, the D. C. League has established an Absentee Voters Information Booth which is open during September and October. To the almost 200 persons a day who call at the booth they distribute the information that *your* League and hundreds of others publish about candidates and issues. To the voters away from home this information means the difference between a confused or invalid vote and a vote based on facts; between haphazard choice and thoughtful consideration.

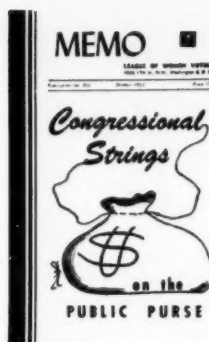
For example, if you are from Ohio, you can be sure that the many absentee voters from Ohio who came to the booth went away with full information on the importance of the November vote to call a Constitutional Convention. Two Ohio voters, upon receiving the material, even held a spirited discussion on the merits of this proposal right in front of the booth! Are you from Connecticut? A Connecticut woman came to the booth and took an armful of the literature from the Connecticut Leagues to distribute at her canasta club—all the members are from the Nutmeg state! A California serviceman borrowed the League flyer which explains the 24 important state ballot measures so that he could show them to other men from California in his company. A housewife from the State of Washington who was quietly reading through the explanation of ballot issues sent by the Washington League startled the workers at the booth by speaking up "Well, they certainly *should* be able to have yellow margarine. We do!" A Wisconsin voter spent half an hour reading the careful material on candidates which the Wisconsin Leagues sent in and the next day came back with a friend.

Whether it was a Methodist minister from Muskogee, Oklahoma or a merchant seaman from Carleton, Minnesota, a lady from a city in two counties or a man who last voted for Harding—visitors to the booth were surprised at the nationwide information they could get and were grateful to the League—both in the District and in *your* home town. By the middle of October 6000 people had been served—compared to 5200 in the entire period in 1948. There is not a state in the union which does not have residents in the District and the help you have given the District League of Women Voters has been a valuable extension of your own Voters Service program. Thanks, from the League and citizens of the District for doing "double duty" in Voters Service.

### HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF . . .

A subscription to the **VOTER**  
For Christmas presents?  
For your school library?  
For your public library?  
For your Congressman?

\$1.00 for one year (prepaid)



## ANNOUNCING

. . . the new Memo, CONGRESSIONAL STRINGS ON THE PUBLIC PURSE (Publication #202). This pamphlet examines the role of Congress in the federal budgetary process and includes various proposals to make congressional budgetary methods more effective. Basic document for study of Item II. (Oct. 1952, 29 pp. 15¢.)

### THE PRESIDENT AND HIS JOB

(Continued from Page 1)

Two aspects of the Chief Executive's responsibility have become of exceptional importance in recent years.

One has to do with the economic life of the nation. No matter how much objection there may be to government intervention in the economy when things are going well, everyone expects the President to act when there are economic storm warnings. In the days of a fairly simple economy the President could be a fairly simple economist. Nowadays he needs at a minimum an understanding of the basic elements which make the U. S. economy tick, and a clear picture of the relationship of our economy to those of other countries.

The other area in which any modern President needs great skill is that of foreign relations. We look to our government to safeguard the American people against the dread spectre of atomic or bacteriological war. More than that, we expect the President to take the lead in a positive program for building a peaceful world.

There is a Proverb—"Where there is no vision the people perish." A political scientist comments that a good President must not only know where he wants to go, he must know where the times require him to go. There is an intangible but very important aspect of the Presidential task which is to have a vision of the future which he can transmit to the people of the country. This is what we mean when we say the country needs "leadership." We want to be inspired to the best that is in us, and a President who can do this is a pearl without price.

The other side of this coin is the ability to understand the needs and wishes of the electorate. A good President will lead public opinion, but he will also follow it.

All in all, the Presidential job seems well-nigh impossible for mortal man to fill. The man we elect can be helped by an electorate which Lord Bryce once described as "a people through which good sense and self-control are widely diffused." However hard any of us fights for our chosen candidate until November 4, on January 20 one or the other of the candidates will be President of the United States. For the next four years he will, under the principles of majority rule, be the leader of those who voted against him as well as of those who voted for him.

A clear picture of the difficult job a President faces may be of help to the citizen in casting a vote on election day. It will certainly be of value *after* election day if it promotes the tolerance and understanding, the "good sense and self-control" on the part of all of us, which will make it possible for the successful candidate to become a successful President.



# Progress Report On the "Little Hoover Commissions"

THE large number of states which have set up "Little Hoover Commissions" indicates unprecedented interest in the reexamination of state administration. Thirty-three states and two territories (Hawaii and Puerto Rico) have established some type of official survey of their administrative agencies since the war. However, these commissions have not been very successful in obtaining legislation to carry out their reorganization proposals. Of the 26 states which recently responded to a questionnaire sent to the 48 states, only one (New Hampshire) indicates positive success.\* In 13 states there has been moderate response. In 10 states there have been almost no results.

Why have so many states sponsored these postwar surveys and so few done anything with them after they are made?

**Why Reorganization?** The state reorganization movement goes back to the beginning of the 20th century. It has been intensified during recent years by the tremendous increase in the cost and complexity of state governmental activities. Between 1940 and 1950 total state expenses increased by more than 130%. The number of permanent state employees (excluding those hired for school work), increased 60%.

**Variety of Surveys.** The fact that the name "Little Hoover Commission" is tacked on to any reorganization body regardless of its composition, size or scope does not mean that these reorganization groups are uniform in structure or purpose.

Thirty-two of the state commissions have a statutory basis. Only three have been established as the result of independent action by the governor. A few of the groups are "mixed commissions" as the Hoover Commission was, with legislators, administrative officials and private citizens as members. Usually, however, the reorganization commissions consist entirely of legislators or of private citizens appointed by the governor. The commissions vary from 5 to 582 members (Texas). These members usually are aided by a small expert staff which does the basic research and initial drafting of the proposals.

The scope of the surveys varies. The majority cover only the executive branch. However, four states have studied all three branches of government; five others have given attention to both the executive and the legislative. A few states have concentrated on just one state administrative problem. For example, in Kentucky and Maine the revenue system has been the principal object of study.

In general the proposals which have been made by the state commissions are based on accepted principles of good public administration. These emphasize the governor as the focal point of administrative responsibility. They also call for further consolidation of agencies and departments.

**Reluctance of Legislature.** Why is there resistance in the state legislatures to reorganization proposals? There is an original hurdle to overcome in the negative attitude toward major changes in the administrative

setup. Legislators often think first of how changes will affect particular administrative officials or how groups who have a stake in the present organization might react. Also, they are usually reluctant to build up the authority of the executive.

Despite the fact that little has been done to put state reorganization proposals into effect several things are suggested by the experience to date.

**Commission Membership and Staffing.** Members should be politically influential in more than one party. If possible the Commission should include some of the leading legislators. It is probably not wise to turn over the survey to large management expert firms, which tend to become known as "foreign experts." However, experts can be helpful for special purposes.

**Timing.** Success seems most likely if the proposals happen to coincide with the revelation of some major scandal or crisis in the state administration or if proposals are made by the "outs" who then get "in." It helps if the governor and both houses of the same party all endorse the proposals, and success is more likely if proposals are presented while the interest is high.

**Public Relations Policies.** A "gold-fish bowl" policy is considered a good way to avoid rumors and "misguided" opposition. Briefing sessions with the legislatures are helpful. Frequent help and advice from the governor is also good. Public opinion is important. Educational preparation can sometimes be made by citizens' committees.

Economy has not been a very effective argument for state reorganization. This may be because state taxation does not as yet inflict much hardship. It is also true that economy does not automatically result from the enactment of reorganization proposals. Rather they may establish conditions in which economy and efficiency are more likely.

One helpful device is a provision that the executive may submit the reorganization proposals to the legislature, which must then take action to defeat them. New Hampshire used this method, as did the U. S. Government on the federal Hoover Commission recommendations. Another is the submission of alternative proposals if the original ones seem too drastic for legislative success.

The most important single lesson of the experience thus far seems to be the need for adapting the principles of good administration to the traditions and particular needs of each state.

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\* Questionnaire on attitudes of state legislatures on "Little Hoover Commission" activities as presented in a paper by Karl A. Bosworth, University of Connecticut to the American Political Science Convention, August, 1952.

